

MEDICAL SERVICE CORPS



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Vision 21

Behavior for Career Success
in the 21st Century

AMEDD CENTER & SCHOOL

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Commanding

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Foreword

In 1940, Dwight Eisenhower was a fifty year old Lieutenant Colonel with 25 years service. His teenage son John was considering applying for an appointment to West Point and Eisenhower thought it wise to sit down and discuss this decision with his son for a number of reasons. His experience had shown that many Army families had virtually forced their sons towards a West Point education for financial reasons. He did not want John to feel obligated to pursue military service for this reason alone. He told him that the family would find a way to pay for a civilian education, if that was what he wanted. More than that, he pointed out that there were many advantages to a civilian education. Eisenhower contrasted collegiate life with military life to make his point.

He talked about how collegiate life was open and unstructured compared to the rigors of cadet life. Just as important, he told John that if he chose a career in business, law or medicine, he could advance as far and succeed as quickly as his abilities would take him.

Eisenhower continued by describing how military life was different. He indicated that promotions are strictly governed by law, and those selected for advancement moving at a fairly predictable pace regardless of individual capabilities. Eisenhower used his own career as an example. Personnel officers told him that the earliest his year group would be considered for

promotion to Colonel would be in 1950, in his 35th year of service at which time he would be 60 years old. At that age, he pointed out, the chances of ever being promoted to the rank of general were virtually nonexistent. He said he had long ago ceased to worry about promotion.

John, as teenage sons often do, pressed the point. "If an Army career was so grim, why have you spent your life in its pursuit?" Eisenhower's reply contains lessons for us all fifty-six years later.

He said that the opportunities presented by his career had been incredibly interesting and that he had an opportunity to serve his country with men of honor who shared his values. Happy at his work and reconciled to limited advancement opportunities, he had come to believe that a man's real satisfaction came from doing his job the very best he could. "My driving ambition was to make everyone I worked for regretful when I was ordered to other duty."

It is this spirit of officership embodied by the actions of General Dwight D. Eisenhower that we have attempted to capture in this monograph. Despite our rapidly changing and increasingly complex military environment, this spirit of selfless service is crucial to our Army's future success. In many ways, it represents a calling more than a career. The goal of this document is to describe the behaviors inherent in that calling that will guarantee our Army's success in the 21st Century.

Colonel Scott Beaty
Chief, Center for Healthcare Education and Studies

“If you want to feel secure, do what you already know how to do. If you want to be a true professional and continue to grow.... go to the cutting edge of your competence, which means a temporary loss of security. So whenever you don’t quite know what you’re doing, know you’re growing.”

Madeline Hunter

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Introduction

The world of the 21st Century will present an incredible array of challenges to our nation and our Army. We are in the midst of an era of unprecedented and accelerated change. Some would call it hyper change, others chaos. The rapid and ongoing demobilization of the Cold War Army continues to create an uncertain future for its officers. Simultaneous, ongoing revolutions in military affairs, including the digitized battlefield, information warfare, and operations other than war add to the uncertainty. The collective effect of these transformational forces presents an astonishingly complex set of variables for company grade officers to contend with as they contemplate their service to our nation.

The Cold War Army is not just changing, it is gone. That large peacetime standing Army, unprecedented in our history, carried standard promotion and assignment templates that formed the core of the leader development model which officers followed in the 1970s, '80s, and early '90s. It provided a predictable career path leading to a definition of success that included promotion to colonel at some reasonably set rate, mercifully, far sooner

than Eisenhower's 35 years of service and 60 years of age. The reduction of the Army, however, has transformed these templates. It is unlikely that a successful Army career of the 21st century will be defined by how fast, or even if, one is promoted to colonel.

"These are the hard times in which a genius would wish to live. Great necessities call forth great leaders."

Abigail Adams

Occurring simultaneously with changes in the military are revolutions in healthcare and information technology. The shift in focus to a market driven health care system and advancements in the delivery of combat healthcare services have caused tremendous change. The new age of information technology has radically affected how we behave and do work. Whereas one can imagine the military and health care revolutions stabilizing over time, the revolution in information technology will most certainly continue well into the future.

How then should success be defined in an unknown, probably unknowable, future? How can a junior officer create a predictable future faced with these anticipated levels of uncertainty? We believe there is a dual answer to that question.

“Predicting the future is easy. It’s trying to figure out what’s going on now that’s hard.”

Fritz R. S. Dressler

First, officers must define their aspirations early in their career and be able and willing to reassess those aspirations periodically. By this we mean an officer must really address the questions: “Who am I? Why am I here? What do I want to be when I grow up?” Accurate answers to these questions require deep introspection. Answering these questions also requires a fundamental, clear understanding of one’s values, both personal and professional. Professional values are clearly articulated in the Professionalism portion of the Army’s Officer Evaluation Report. These values must be embraced and accepted as a baseline for all officers. These and other fundamental values such as caring and concern for soldiers entrusted to us as officers can never be violated. We do not attempt to deal in depth with values here, but we believe it is important for officers to ask these most fundamental of questions from time to time, especially during times of transformational change.

Second, and closely linked to aspirations are behaviors. Junior officers must ask, “What do I have to do to fulfill my aspirations? If my aspirations change, how must my behavior change? How can I adapt my behavior to a changed environment and still act consistently with my aspirations?”

For example, the stable, predictable, and fairly secure future that characterized military careers of the past no longer exists. For many officers, this is very disconcerting. There are behaviors and characteristics, however, a junior officer can display and embody which will serve to create a personal safety net. The military environment of today and tomorrow will reward those officers who orient quickly and act based on this new environment. The identification of qualities, e.g., behaviors and characteristics, which will enhance their ability to add value to the organization is probably the most certain, long lasting advice that can be given junior officers today. If these qualities enable them to better serve the needs of the organization, they stand a much better chance of enjoying a successful career.

Recently, several authors and researchers have identified the need for individuals to display specific qualities in order to operate effectively in a rapidly changing and increasingly complex environment. These qualities include specific behaviors and characteristics such as integrity, commitment, decisiveness, continual learning, accountability, adaptability, and acceptance of ambiguity and uncertainty. Identifying which, if not all, of these qualities are believed to be most important may well be the most enduring legacy of senior officers.

This monograph is based on the results of a study commissioned by the Center for Healthcare Education and Studies to identify those behaviors and characteristics

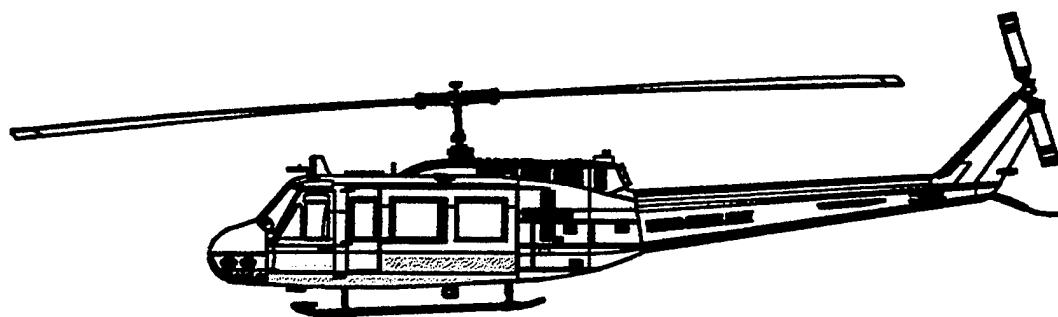
senior MSC officers believe are critical to a successful military career in the 21st Century. This study was designed to specifically identify the qualities MSC colonels believe will be important for junior officers to display in order to succeed, regardless of the institutional definition of success.

Qualities represent but one variable in the model which predicts success in the military. Whether it is an important variable is a personal decision. These qualities are frequently assumed to be well known by all officers. Unfortunately, this assumption is very weak. Most officers have not recently discussed or even thought about what qualities they believe a good officer should display or embody. We feel it is very important to visit these qualities periodically to ensure all officers have a good understanding of what they mean.

We believe these qualities are very important and that they endure because they are consistent with our institutional values, i.e., values which will not change as long as there is an Army. We share those values not only with each other, but with the lineage of outstanding officers, like Eisenhower and Bradley, who came before us. Our driving ambition remains to make everyone we work for and with regretful when we are ordered to other duty.

“Careers come and go. Jobs change. This is nothing new—it’s just happening far faster than ever before.”

Price Pritchett



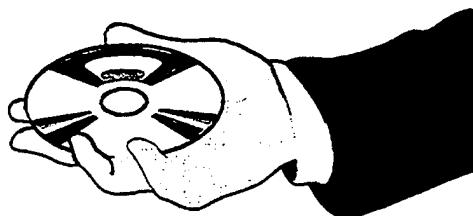
“In 1991, for the first time ever, companies spent more money on computing and communications gear than the combined monies spent on industrial, mining, farm, and construction equipment.”

Price Pritchett



“Communication technology is radically changing the speed, direction, and amount of information flow, even as it alters work flows all across organizations. As a case in point, the number of secretaries is down 521,000 just since 1987.”

Rick Tetzeli



“Today’s average consumers wear more computing power on their wrists than existed in the entire world before 1961.”

Ian Morrison and Greg Schmid

An officer must have



Integrity

“Integrity.... is having a unifying set of values that guides choices of action regardless of the situation.”

Kouzes and Posner

Integrity means much more than just honesty. It includes but goes far beyond honesty. Whereas honesty is telling the truth or conforming one's words to reality, integrity is behaving consistently with one's aspirations to insure our deeds match our words and that both reflect our value system.

Integrity will be especially important in the future because of its significance in the development of trust. As the Army changes and the environment becomes increasingly uncertain, officers will be faced with an even greater range of temptations which challenge their integrity. Change often results in the display of many good behaviors; unfortunately, many bad behaviors may also be displayed.

For example, in an attempt to cope with the increased level of confusion and uncertainty caused by change, it is easy to compromise one's behavior by taking safe courses

of action that don't rock the boat or achieve excellence but rather just meet standards. Subjugating selfless service to self-centeredness, saying one thing and doing another, and making yourself look good at the expense of subordinates and peers all work to destroy integrity unless one is willing to admit these behaviors reflect your value system. Most officers, especially those with aspirations of a long and successful career, would not admit to having such a value system. Therefore, when an officer compromises his values, he is acting without integrity.

Steven Covey, author of 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, believes one of the most important and visible means of displaying integrity is to be loyal to those who are not present. Essentially, integrity means avoiding duplicity in your relationships with others. Criticizing others when they are not present while sweet-talking them to their face does nothing more than destroy your own integrity. Such duplicitous behavior may provide temporary pleasure but, in the long term, such behavior destroys integrity.

Max DePree, author of Leadership is an Art, defines integrity as a "fine sense of one's obligations." When actions reflect personal values, one is behaving with integrity. There is no room for duplicitous behavior. People with integrity are individuals whom one can depend upon and trust.

Without integrity, trust can not exist. Creating trusting relationships has always been and will always be

the hallmark of military professionalism. This must always be, because at the end of the day, America's parents entrust the welfare of their sons and daughters to our care. Success today and tomorrow starts with integrity.

"Integrity is the continuous harmonizing of our habit system with our value system."

Steve Covey

An officer must be

Morally Courageous

Moral courage continues to be a well respected characteristic of officership within the Army. Along with integrity and selfless service, moral courage forms the triad of characteristics which is the linchpin of the Army.

Defining what morally courageous means is not an easy task. Although a simple definition may not be possible, most people do know what moral courage is when they see or don't see it. Definition by example may be the best way to describe moral courage. Morally courageous officers have a steadfast adherence to the values long associated with Army professionalism. Morally courageous officers have a code of ethics which is in concert with the Army's code of ethics, epitomized by the Military Academy's "Duty, Honor, Country." They also abide by the law of the land. Perhaps the best description is that of the officer who has the ability to do the harder right thing rather than the easier wrong thing.

One thing is certain. The more complex the environment, the easier it will become to compromise one's ethics. Identifying the right thing to do will become much more difficult. Although situational ethics have gained in popularity recently, morally courageous officers

will live by a set of standards and values which will enable them to consistently handle any situation in a morally courageous manner. This consistent adherence to an absolute set of values and standards is what will set the successful officer apart from others.

“All great leaders have wrestled with their souls.”

Kouzes and Posner

Price Pritchett, author of The Ethics of Excellence, recommends certain guidelines for determining ethical behavior. His guidelines include obeying the law and not hiding behind it; doing the right thing when there is such a thing; listening to your conscience, although you can't always trust it; being prepared to be punished for honesty; permitting mistakes so you don't promote coverups; and, probably most importantly, letting pride be your guide.

Successful junior officers will have a well established code of ethics which will guide all their behaviors. Our profession demands this from us. We must demand nothing less of ourselves and of those who work with us.



An officer must be

Accountable (Responsible)

One of the second order consequences of the downsizing of the Army is the requirement for all officers, but especially junior officers, to be held to much higher standards of accountability. Junior officers are being given more responsibility, power, and authority which in the past was reserved for officers much higher in rank. In order for the Army to maintain its high standards of excellence, junior officers are expected to be more accountable.

During these times of process action teams, self-directed work teams, and projects which extend across organizational boundary lines, accountability must be defined much more broadly than before. In addition to personal accountability, being held accountable for the collective outcomes of a group is becoming much more critical.

It is also important to realize that accountability must concern more than just the process of performing work. Accountability must focus on outcomes. The reason concepts such as reengineering and business process improvement have gained popularity recently is because processes have often been designed to the detriment of

outcomes. Focusing accountability on outcomes, assuming the process has been considered and found to be ethical, should result in the development of processes which serve no other agenda but to lead to superior outcomes.

Personal and group accountability are necessary but not sufficient conditions for success. Successful officers are also systems thinkers. They assume the responsibility and accountability for helping fix the broad range of systems problems likely to occur as a result of change. In addition, they do this without having to be told. Accountable officers identify problems, offer solutions, and willingly accept the responsibility and accountability for fixing them, even if these problems are normally considered to be outside their realm of responsibility.

One thing is certain. Accountable officers are not finger pointers, "Monday morning quarterbacks," or constant complainers when the system is not working. They do not go out of their way to avoid accountability. These negative behaviors waste a tremendous amount of energy and serve only to create a culture of blame. Successful officers focus on creating a culture of accountability throughout the organization.

"At the heart of being accountable is the matter of caring. In many areas of business, sadly, 'to care' is an innovation."

Max DePree

An officer must be

Competent

A competent individual is someone having good skills and who always meets standards. The Army requires a higher standard of competency. Today, a competent individual is thought of as someone having exceptional skills and who always exceeds standards. Competence means being technically and tactically proficient. It means knowing your job, your organization's mission and how it fits in with the greater organization. It means a thorough understanding of the commander's intent and the confidence to act independently within the scope of that intent. It also means not having to be told every mission. Competent officers take aggressive action based on a thorough understanding of implied tasks. Finally, competence means aggressively learning from every single experience.

Competent officers are given more opportunities to gain new skills and expertise. Officers who have proven their competency are given more responsibility and accountability. Consequently, these officers enhance their ability to assume positions of leadership early in

their careers. Officers assigned to positions of leadership are more likely to earn the respect of superiors and subordinates. Once this respect is earned, these officers become more valuable members of the organization. Therefore, competent officers stand a much greater chance for success within the Army.

As with most success stories, however, the greatest challenge is not in becoming successful, it is in remaining successful. The same applies to competency. Once an officer is perceived as being competent, the pressure shifts to maintaining that competency. This can only occur through continual education, self-study, or additional on-the-job training experiences.

Today, too many officers believe they will retain their competency for the rest of their career without additional education and experience. This arrogant attitude is often found in officers moving up within the hierarchy. A promotion equates to demonstrated potential; it does not confer competency. In fact, it should be a signal to the officer that there is now much more to learn.

Successful junior officers are wary of falling victim to the arrogance of perceived competence. Considering that the amount of information available to us is doubling every 5 years, officers will find maintaining competency to be a tremendous, but exciting challenge. Obtaining and maintaining competency is an important basis to future success.

“...Officers can never act with confidence until they are masters of their profession.”

General Henry Knox

An officer must be

Committed (Dedicated)

“Commitment is what transforms a promise into reality. It is the words that speak boldly of your intentions. And the actions which speak louder than the words.”

Anonymous

For some officers, this next statement is good news. For others, it is not. Junior officers should expect the Army to expect more from them in the 21st Century. This phenomenon has already become reality for many officers. Our nation has reduced defense spending during the past five years while still expecting the same, if not more, output for these resources. If the country is going to ask more of the Army, the Army is going to ask more of you.

Officers can be expected to produce more work, of a higher quality, and to do it more rapidly with fewer resources. This can be accomplished only by officers who are highly committed to their work.

“High job commitment is a gift you should give to yourself.”

Price Pritchett

Many of today's senior officers can recall how the Army used to handle situations when additional work had to be performed. Organizations usually requested more money to hire additional employees to perform all this new work. Today's reality is that there are not going to be any more people and there is not going to be any more money. There will be less of both.

Demonstrating a high level of commitment during times of transformational change is not easy. The most common response is the gradual development of a mind set of doing only enough to get by. People psychologically unplug from their work. This is a painless and efficient way of coping with the stress, uncertainty, and fatigue that often accompany change. Recent research has shown that although people are committing more time to their work, they are giving far less effort. To survive in the decade ahead, junior officers must remain committed to their work and, equally important, must obtain higher levels of job commitment from their peers and their subordinates.

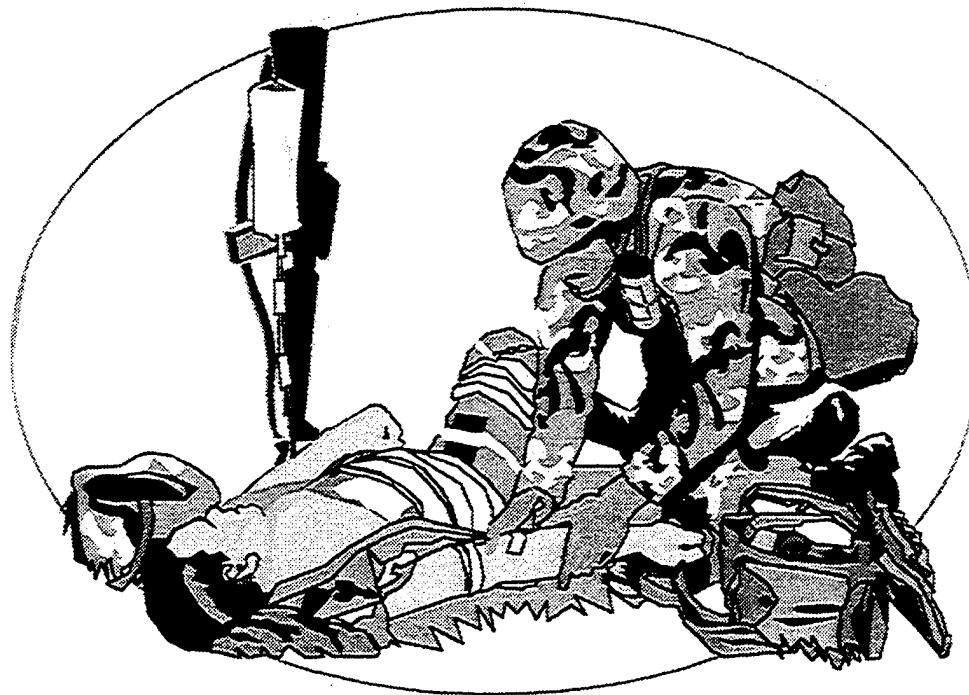
Success comes to those who are committed passionately to their work and to those who can quickly recommit to new work when their job or the organization changes. Failing to commit to the new way the organization expects officers to perform their jobs will only result in increased stress and a waste of time and

energy that could have been better utilized in learning how to do work better and more efficiently.

“The greatest rewards come only from the greatest commitment.”

Arlene Blum

The bottom line is that strong job commitment serves to make an officer's life more rewarding, certainly more educational, and much more productive. Officers and their organizations gain from increased job commitment. Equally important is the fact that a strong commitment to the job makes an officer more valuable from the organization's perspective. This could prove to be one of the best means of building a personal safety net.



An officer must be

Adaptable

“People don’t resist change, they resist being changed.”

Peter Senge

Adaptable officers are able to successfully manage their careers during times of extreme uncertainty and even chaos. They are able to take advantage of the tremendous opportunities often created by change. If officers accept the premise that the Army will continue to change rapidly, it is imperative that they change with it. The Army's very survivability depends on its ability to reshape its structure and to redefine its mission to meet the needs of a changing world.

These changes promise to be anything but incremental. Therefore, the degree of success officers enjoy during their Army career will also be determined by their ability to adapt to these changes, regardless of the degree of change, and to rapidly re-identify how they can add value to the new Army.

Adaptability has many meanings and can manifest itself in many ways. It means performing new tasks in new ways. It also means that short-term assignments

may well be the norm and not the exception. The proliferation of Process Action Teams is a manifestation of this phenomenon. Rapidly changing organizational structures may also mean officers may be working for more than one supervisor at one time. Ultimately, the jobs junior officers perform, the people they work for and with, and the responsibilities with which they are charged will change continuously. In the future, officers may not have **A** job, but will be expected to perform many jobs. If they look at these likelihoods as insurmountable challenges and not opportunities, their chances for long-term success in the military will be greatly diminished.

Officers are often reluctant to adapt because change requires new learning, the creation of new working relationships, and even the destruction of existing models of success. It is important to realize that an officer's contribution, especially in the Army of the 21st Century, rather than being based purely on some position within a hierarchy, will be based more on his* level of knowledge and ability to rapidly create new working relationships in order to accomplish tasks.

Unfortunately, some officers choose to resist the call for change rather than adapt to it. They are often the most unhappy and unproductive people in an organization because their resistance to change frequently results in increased stress and countless hours of nonproductive time as they overtly or covertly devise ways to maintain the status quo. More often than not,

their efforts are fruitless and organizationally and personally damaging. This is often manifested as misguided loyalty. Today, clinging to the past is more likely to be considered disloyal. Resistance to change and the overriding desire to protect the status quo is probably doing the organization more harm than good.

Successful officers invest their finite sources of energy adapting to, rather than fighting, change. Being adaptable may well be the quickest way of building a reputation as someone who works hard at making the necessary changes. The Army looks for leaders who can quickly adapt to change, who are comfortable in a dynamic environment, and who can be counted on to invest all their energy managing this change rather than resisting it.

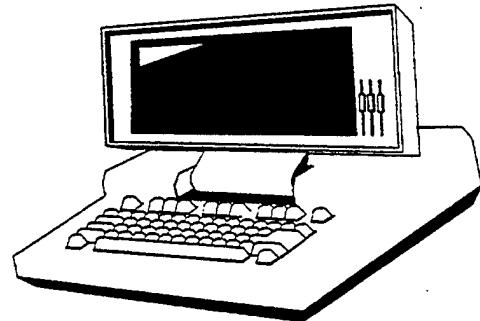
Rewards come to those officers who can quickly re-establish new working relationships and assume a leadership role helping others adapt to change. The Army of the 21st Century has no room, nor the time, to placate the whiners and the naysayers who refuse to adapt.

“You think you understand the situation, but what you don’t understand is that the situation just changed.”

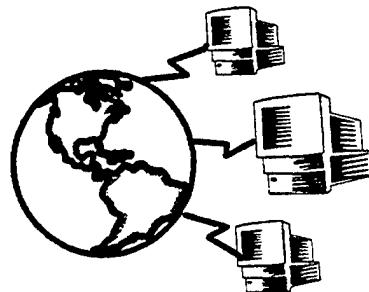
Putnam Investments advertisement

*Generic wording representing male and female officers

“There has been more information produced in the last 30 years than during the previous 5,000.”



“The information supply available to us doubles every 5 years.”



“A weekday edition of The New York Times contains more information than the average person was likely to come across in a lifetime during 17th-century England.”

Richard S. Wurman

An officer must

Seek Knowledge

“Rather, participants [in the new age] must learn how to learn. They must be equipped with the conceptual skills required to deal with perpetual change.”

Davidow and Malone

The information supply available to us doubles every five years. What you learned five years ago is probably obsolete and in need of updating. To survive this rapid pace of change, officers must continually seek new knowledge. As pitching great Nolan Ryan once said, “There is no off-season anymore.” If new learning isn’t taking place daily, obsolescence occurs rapidly. Successful officers make new learning an integral part of their professional development.

Lifelong learning is indispensable to becoming and remaining successful in a rapidly changing, increasingly complex environment. It is essential that an officer embrace the learning embedded in all three pillars of leader development: Institutional training; self development; and, unit training and experience. The Army

provides military education in the Basic, Advanced, Combined Arms, and Command and Staff Colleges. More than that, though, officers must aggressively learn from each experience in each unit. Lastly, perhaps the greatest leverage comes from self directed learning.

Self directed learning can take many forms. An aggressive reading program is essential to future success. Well developed computer skills and the ability to negotiate the Internet put the knowledge of the world at your fingertips. New learning within an officer's technical field is also critical. Membership in a professional organization can facilitate obtaining new knowledge. Successful officers volunteer to work outside their area of expertise for the new learning experience. Regardless of the avenues taken to gain new knowledge, it is the officer's personal responsibility to become a life long learner.

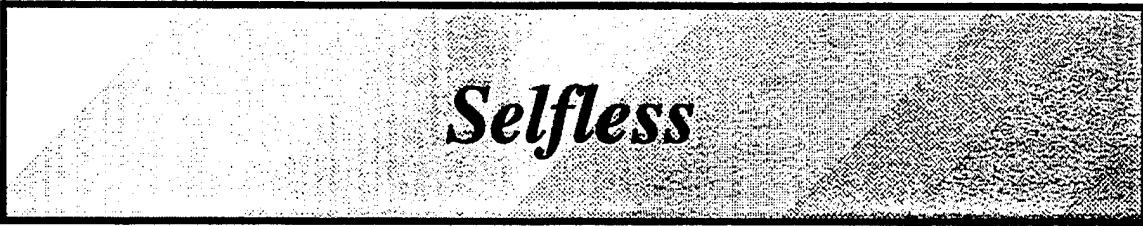
It is also important to seek opportunities to broaden your knowledge base. If an officer is afforded the opportunity to attend formal degree producing programs, he must embrace it, and then ensure he maximizes the amount of new knowledge to be gained from the experience. An officer must not look upon these opportunities as a way of taking a break from the military routine. These are opportunities too valuable to waste.

The more an officer knows and the better able he is to do their work, the more valuable he is to the Army. A key component of an officer's internal safety net is his

ability to obtain knowledge through a well established learning program in order to remain current in their field.



An officer must be



Selfless

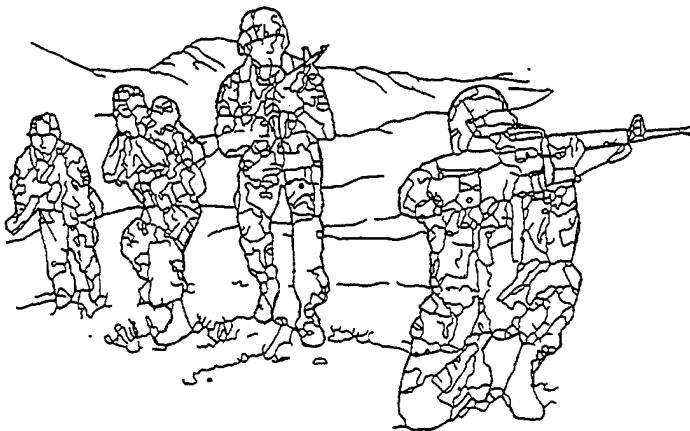
Selfless behavior is at the heart of leadership. Junior officers wishing to be successful must clearly understand and internalize selflessness. The earlier they do so the better. Selfless behavior means putting the interests of the Army first, i.e., before one's own interests. This can best be accomplished by putting the interests of our soldiers first and foremost in all our decisions and actions.

Selfless service appears to have diminished in importance in the military over the past several years. Too many officers give selfless behavior lipservice, only to demonstrate their true feelings by behaving in a selfish manner. Instead of asking "What is the Army asking of me," many officers seem more interested in asking "What am I asking of the Army." This type of behavior is very damaging to the institution and its long term health.

More than ever, the Army needs officers to be good leaders. Leadership not only means being visionary, honest, competent, and good organizational stewards, it also means placing the welfare of others and the

organization before one's personal welfare. This is not an easy task. It is easy in this 'get ahead world' to put selfserving interests first. Such an attitude compromises an officer's ability to make sound, rational decisions which represent the best interests of the military. This behavior is not and will not be tolerated.

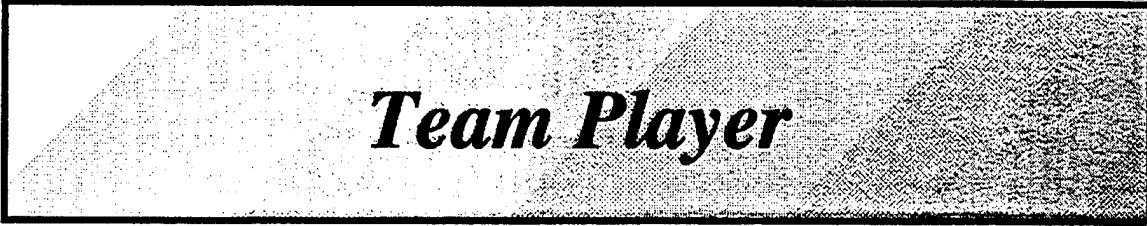
At the heart of selfless service is trust. Officers who have demonstrated selfless behavior in their actions will be entrusted with much greater responsibility and accountability within the Army. These are the officers who will lead the Army of the future. These individuals will have the greatest opportunity for success in the Army of the 21st Century.



"Love 'em and lead 'em."

Major General John H. Stanford

An officer must be a



Team Player

“When herding eels, it is better to use a net than a rope.”

Steven Covey

Smart officers know they can not do it alone. The Army demands far greater accomplishments, and enhanced decision making speed and precision from its officers than was expected of officers just five years ago. These extraordinary accomplishments and the ability to make sound, timely decisions can best be achieved through collaborative efforts as a member of a team.

Successful teams have a clear vision of a collective future. Everyone on the team knows their role in contributing to that future. Team players work tirelessly to maximize their contributions. Sometimes the individual's contribution is critical to the success of the overall outcome, other times it is a supporting component. Successful team players execute their roles as perfectly as possible regardless of their criticality to the specific mission. The team player's satisfaction comes from the group outcome rather than from

individual achievement; individual achievement only has meaning within the context of the group success.

Michael Schrage, author of No More Teams, believes collaboration is the key to successful team work. Collaboration can be defined as the process of shared creation. It means having two or more people with complimentary skills developing ideas which could not have been possible alone. Good collaboration, and thus good team work, can occur in person, via mail, phone, or computer. Identifying the individual with the skills which best compliment your skills and which will be most useful to the decision making process is critical. For this reason, the nature of the problem should be the primary factor in determining your collaborators. Therefore, junior officers must be capable of being team players on a team whose members continuously change.

An officer's ability to collaborate as a member of a team is enhanced by information technology. Technology is not a substitute for collaboration; it is a tool to enhance collaboration. What technology does is enhance an officer's ability to collaborate with a much wider range of experts, people with whom he can exchange ideas to improve his ability to make faster, more accurate decisions. Every time an officer suggests an idea or an improvement to an idea, he is, in essence, collaborating as a member of a team.

The ability to collaborate is essential to organizational productivity. Speed, precision, and the

ability to gather information from a multitude of sources is essential for success in a rapidly changing environment. A well organized, collaborative, and technologically connected group of individuals is essential to provide the speed and accuracy required from employees by their organizations.

The Army is no different. Future success depends as much, if not more, on the quality and quantity of work performed by individuals collaborating as members of a team than on the quality and quantity of work by individuals alone.



“The collaborative context appears wherever people are working together to add value.”

Michael Schrage

An officer must be



Loyal

"The soldier's first loyalty is to his country, whose values and purposes he has solemnly sworn to uphold."

General Douglas MacArthur

Loyalty to the values, beliefs, and principles embodied by our country and within the Army is a critical aspect of officership. Our first loyalty is to our country's constitution, whose values and purposes we have solemnly sworn to uphold. This type of loyalty has long enjoyed an excellent reputation as a virtue to be emulated by all professionals. It remains valid today.

There are situations, however, where excessive or blind loyalty to specific organizations, policies, and procedures within the military can be dangerous. In a stable environment in which the organization is under little pressure to change, loyalty to organizational traditions is a virtue. In a rapidly changing and increasingly chaotic environment, loyalty to outdated traditions which are not changing fast enough to meet the demands caused by change must be challenged if the organization is to survive.

Loyalty to parochial interests which fail to change in response to a changing environment is, in effect, disloyalty. Successful officers challenge the assumptions that underlie current practices and seek new and innovative ways of helping their organization remain competitive.

Successful officers will be the ones who demonstrate the courage to suggest changes to the status quo when it appears the status quo is no longer capable of keeping the organization competitive. This is especially true today in the Army Medical Department. Blind loyalty to our successful past will almost certainly guarantee our failure as an institution. We must continually question the status quo in order to improve how we provide health care.

The Army requires a new kind of loyalty from its members as its environment becomes increasingly complex and difficult. In the decade ahead, loyalty will mean celebrating the passing of the old ways of doing Army business when these ways are no longer viable or no longer serve a useful purpose. Successful officers demonstrate their loyalty by continually searching for new and innovative ways of improving the Army, by strengthening those traditions worth preserving, and by eliminating those which have no future value.

"Being loyal to a culture that is suicidal is a dishonorable act."

Price Pritchett

An officer must be

Decisive

“You’ve got to stand for something or you will fall for anything.”

Country Song Lyric

Change and complexity create confusion. They can also create an atmosphere of indecisiveness. A rapidly changing environment creates many new opportunities, but only for those who can quickly decide how best to use them. Unfortunately, to the less adventurous, these new opportunities are often perceived as threatening simply because they may require new practices, procedures, and behaviors in order to take full advantage of them. They also involve additional risk. These perceptions create a wait and see attitude. Such an attitude will result in the loss of these valuable opportunities. The officer who is decisive when presented with new opportunities will have the most to gain in the years ahead.

It is often easier for junior officers to wait for specific instructions before attempting to solve a problem or to make a decision. The result of this behavior is an

over-dependence on others before decisions are made.

Tomorrow, a smaller, more geographically dispersed Army will often require junior officers to take the initiative and not to wait for instructions before making decisions. Speed, as important as it is now, will become even more important to organizations in the future. Operating with a keen sense of urgency has become the norm. Striving for perfection at the expense of speed can not be tolerated. High quality decisions must come quickly in order for them to be of any use to the organization.

The T.Q.M. philosophy embodies a power down concept with people lower in the organization having greater decision making authority. Successful organizations are unencumbered by excessive bureaucracy. In order for the Army to work successfully in the years ahead, people must be willing to make decisions in a timely manner.

Being decisive does increase personal risk. Decisiveness also means assuming additional responsibility. As mentioned earlier, in a downsized military, everyone must become more independent and self-sufficient. Without a willingness to make decisions, however, independent and self-sufficient junior officers will not be of much assistance to the Army of tomorrow.

Junior officers must realize that an unwillingness to be decisive may well be more career threatening than waiting to be told exactly what to do. Slowing the

organization down by insisting on gathering all the available information before taking action will be increasingly looked upon as a serious flaw in the professionalism of the officer. An officer unwilling to make decisions will appear uncertain, dependent, and lacking in good judgment. These are flaws the Army will not tolerate.

“If you come to a fork in the road, take it.”

Yogi Berra

An officer must be

Innovative

“Even if you are on the right track, you’ll get run over if you just sit there.”

Will Rogers

The Army will expect much more from its officers in the future. To meet these expectations, officers must become more productive in their work. One of the best ways of increasing productivity is to be willing to experiment with new and innovative ways of maximizing outputs. Innovative practices, however, almost always bring increased levels of risk. Not every innovative idea works. There are sure to be failures. In order to fully understand why some officers are more willing to be innovative, it is important to understand the role of risk in innovation.

Future success will be determined primarily by an officer's willingness to be innovative and to experiment in his work. There will always be problems for which tried and true formulas will provide successful results and all officers must be capable of effectively and efficiently coping with these problems. More complex

and unusual problems require innovative solutions. Only the best and brightest officers are capable of the innovation necessary to solve these types of problems. The fact that change is increasing in scope and frequency indicates a much greater need ahead for officers capable of providing innovative solutions to problems.

One of the primary reasons officers are sometimes reluctant to be innovative is because of the increased risk associated with innovation. Of all the behaviors discussed so far, the willingness to assume greater levels of risk in an attempt to be more innovative promises to be the most controversial. The zero defects culture that increasingly is appearing in the military today has also become its biggest threat. A zero defects culture stifles innovation and the new learning that comes from it. The Force XXI Army stresses innovation and experimentation as the best means of taking advantage of a shrinking resource base. Officers will experiment and be innovative only if they are able to operate in an environment that tolerates some failure.

Kouzes and Posner, authors of The Leadership Challenge, believe that one of the biggest differences between a leader and a bureaucrat is in the former's inclination to encourage risk taking through the experimentation with innovative practices and procedures. Leaders accept more risk taking because they know this is the best way to ensure that new learning is occurring throughout the organization. They

also know that the greatest achievements are most often the result of how innovative new ideas or solutions are in helping solve problems.

While no one would advocate failure for failure's sake, a certain amount of failure must be tolerated. The cost of failure that sometimes accompanies innovation is mitigated by the new learning that takes place when organizations are testing innovative ways of doing their work. Because of the tremendous benefits which may be realized when an innovation works, it is becoming increasingly more worthwhile for junior officers to be innovative despite the associated risks. The key to future success, therefore, is in being receptive to new opportunities, quickly calculating the risks involved with these opportunities, and then rapidly applying innovative ways to take advantage of these opportunities.

Strong adherence to the status quo, though very comforting, will prove more damaging to an officer in the future than will the risk of failure that comes with trying new ideas or solutions to problems. The willingness to assume greater risks through innovation is an extremely important measure of an officer's character and an important determinant of his future success.

An officer must be

Visionary

“Visions are values projected into the future.”

Trevor Hancock

Successful officers will have a vision of the future that will guide their actions. Being visionary is important not only because of its futurist orientation but also because “vision” connotes a standard of excellence or an ideal. Visionary officers are capable of seeing a better world than currently exists, and they use this vision to formulate plans to move the organization toward that ideal.

Having vision means being able to describe a compelling, desirable future that causes someone to act. An officer doesn’t have to be a colonel or be able to forecast twenty years from now to have vision. As a junior officer, your vision is likely to be a near term, 3-5 year picture. Individually, you need to be able to say, “This is who I want to be or what I want to be or what I want to have done 5 years from now.” It needs to be a mental picture of that future state that does not currently exist. That picture, when contrasted with current reality, will help identify the ways and means to achieve that

desired future state. For a lieutenant, a near term vision might include successful company command. In order to achieve that goal, certain experiences as a lieutenant such as platoon leader time, company XO time, advanced course, Combined Arms Senior Service School, etc., might be considered key. The key is that picture of company command helps describe the pathway from the present. The longer the time frame of consideration, the less clear the vision and the more the vision reflects values rather than a clear picture. The older, more experienced the officer, the longer the focal length of the vision. For a company commander, however, 3-5 years is just fine.

Officers who are visionary are more confident in their abilities than officers with no clear focus to their lives. They are self motivated, results oriented, and capable of tolerating greater levels of change and complexity. They are also more likely to assume positions of leadership within the organization.

The bottom line is that officers with a vision have demonstrated a higher degree of maturity than officers without a vision. Visioning requires a greater depth of knowledge about themselves, their organizations, and the environment. Officers with a vision send a clear message that they are capable of assuming positions of increased responsibility. These are the type of officers who have the greatest chance of enjoying success in the Force XXI Army.

“If you can dream it, you can do it.”

Walt Disney

“I have a dream...”

Martin Luther King

An officer must be accepting of

Ambiguity and Uncertainty

In the 21st Century, Army officers will not have just one job, but will be expected to perform many jobs. Officers may have a primary responsibility, yet their greatest contributions will probably come from other jobs they perform for the organization. In an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world, accurately defining one's job will be like nailing Jell-O to a tree.

The future will not be well structured. Assignments will come and go with increasing speed. An officer may join an organization and, although he will know his responsibilities, he may be unable to define accurately to an outsider what his primary duties are, yet he will be working harder and on more meaningful jobs than ever before. Those uncomfortable with this uncertainty, those unable to tolerate ambiguity, will not succeed.

The most successful officers are continual learners who quickly assimilate new skills to accomplish a variety of tasks. Once a task is completed, new learning begins in order to accomplish the next task. The result is the development of a cadre of well trained generalists with a multitude of specialty skills. The Army of the future

needs specialists and generalists. Successful officers will be both.

For those unable to accept ambiguity and uncertainty, the world always seems out of focus. As a result, officers will appear to drift, incapable of clearly providing value added work, simply because they are uncertain what to do to help the organization. This dead wood will be culled out quickly.

Many officers see the world as one-dimensional. Successful junior officers realize that the world is multi-dimensional and look at problems from different angles. This new world will generate more questions than answers. And the answers that are generated will not be permanent. Successful officers who have developed the means of surviving and even thriving in these foggy conditions will be looked upon as having developed very valuable and special skills.

“There is no permanent solution.”

Price Pritchett

Conclusion

If a junior officer were to indicate that this monograph contained no new information, it would not be disappointing. Such a statement would indicate that this officer is well read and already has a good understanding of the qualities which many believe will be so necessary for success in the 21st century. In essence, this officer has displayed an important behavior, seeking new knowledge, which will serve him well in the decades ahead.

Whereas the qualities identified as important may not be radically different from those which were important determinants of success for MSCs in the rank of colonel, what some of these qualities mean will undoubtedly be different. In 1980, being adaptable meant something much different to junior officers than it does to junior officers of today or tomorrow.

The challenges that lie ahead for junior officers are many. So too are the opportunities. The best, most successful officers are capable of rapidly detecting these opportunities and reacting quickly to take full advantage of them. One thing is certain, officers will not find life in the Army of the 21st Century boring.

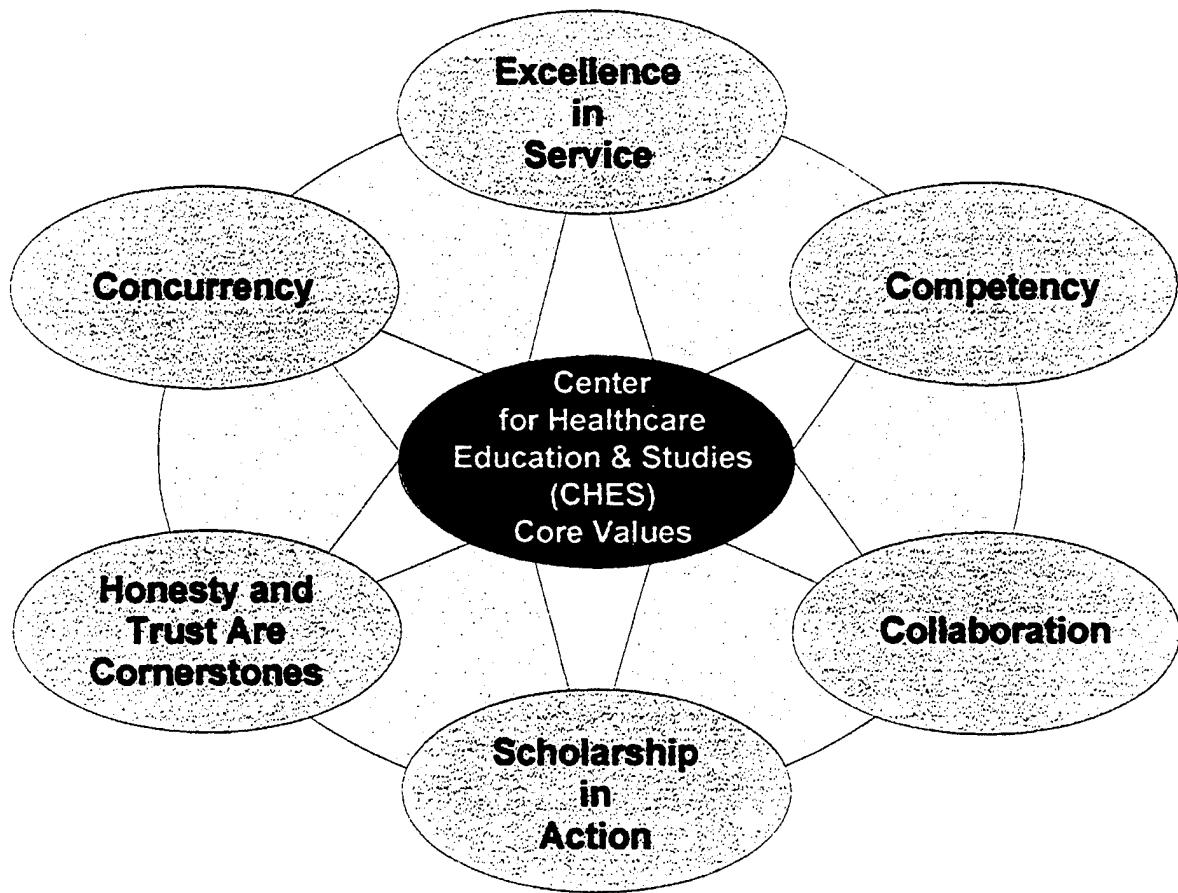
The goal of this monograph was to report the qualities MSC colonels identified as being most important to junior officers who wish to be successful in the Army in the next 10 - 15 years. The research leading to this monograph served as the framework for our discussion of what the qualities identified will mean to junior officers in the decades ahead. Our hope is that this monograph will serve as a valuable tool to junior officers intent on enjoying success within the Army. Although there may not exist a permanent answer to the question of what it will take to be successful in the military in the uncertain environment of the 21st Century, an understanding of the qualities thought important to success may provide the most accurate, long lasting guidance we can give to our junior officers.

Jody R. Rogers
Deputy Director, US Army
Baylor University Graduate Program
in Healthcare Administration

“In the end, it is important to remember that we cannot become what we need to be by remaining what we are.”

Max DePree

Center for Healthcare Education and Studies



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